

AMIE AND HENRY LEE;

The Spheres of the Sexes.

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CHAPTER VII.

A week passed away, and the usual routine of every-day existence settled itself upon the family of the Lees.

Poverty, harder and more grinding than they had ever known, was forcing its bitter presence upon them and reminding them of its power in every conceivable way.

If Amie could have had the opportunity to use her judgment and intuition in administering upon the estate, she might have disposed of sufficient property to pay the deceased proprietor's liquor bills, and been enabled to keep a little spot that might have been home. But the law in its majestic took possession of the business and administered upon the estate according to "precedent," and the property went to the highest bidder, under the hammer.

Barely enough was realized from the effects to pay the funeral expenses and liquor bills of the deceased after administrators, lawyers, clerks and judge's fees had been secured; and when spring came, Amie and Henry found themselves minus a home, and encumbered with a large family of helpless orphans for whom the beneficent laws of the land had made no adequate provision.

The principal proprietor of one of the Shyrtleville saloons had bought the farm at a very low figure. In fact, he congratulated himself, and confidently reared his chums upon the strength of the good bargain he had made, and, with a spirit of liberality for which that class of men are everywhere remarkable, he generously offered to rent the place and its appurtenances to the orphans for a certain stipend, provided the black stumps and dead trees were to be removed from the clearing around the house, within a given time, as a gratuity.

Henry shrugged his shoulders and looked ruefully at the last half-extracted root of a great hollow stump, that Amie had often mentally compared to the decayed and blackened molars in her deceased father's mouth.

"Blame me if I'll ever dig stumps for a tin," said nothing of upendin' 'em for fun," said Henry, savagely.

"But I'm sure I can't see what is left for you to do, brother."

"See," was the emphatic answer. "We'll go to the city."

"But you might just as well say we'll fly to the moon. How are we to get there? And how would we live if we should get there?"

"It couldn't be any worse than it is here. We might starve among these stumps if we didn't keep rootin'. The police force would feed us in the city if we couldn't do better than to be vagrants."

As the new proprietor of the farm was desirous of securing a steady tenant, the orphaned family was given the usual ten days' notice to vacate the premises.

"What a glorious thing it is to live in a free country!" said Amie, stamping her foot savagely. "The equal protection of the laws is such an advantage to women and children! Don't I wish I were a man?"

"Why, sis?" was Henry's interrogatory. He had taken to asking the whys and wherefores of many of her thoughts of late.

"Because I feel like an eagle chained. I can think of a hundred things I might do, only it isn't proper for a woman to do them. But who is to earn a livelihood for this family if my hands are to be tied, I wonder?"

The baby needed her attention, and she left the room with him in tears.

"I'll go to Portsmouth, and see if something can't be done," said Henry.

"Let me go too," pleaded James.

"No," replied his brother, "the girls can't get along without you. I'll go first, and see if I can get you something to do."

"Fifty if we can't get along without Jim," said Fanny. "About all he'll do will be to keep potatoes from being wasted."

"A weighty consideration, owing to their price—two bits a bushel!" laughed Henry.

"Well, it's settled," said Amie, returning to the room with her puffy, fretful charge. "Henry must go to the city and hunt us some sort of a place for shelter. He can get a situation with his friends, and the rest of us must find something to do."

"But, sis, you've no idea how bad a place the city is for a handsome girl like you."

"Don't you suppose I can take care of myself?"

"But there are so many bad men in the city."

"You proposed the city first, remember? But aren't men our natural protectors? Why shouldn't they take care of us?"

"Because they won't, that's all."

"But they shall, Henry. They make the laws and handle the cash, and control it, and I intend to see to it that we, their wards, are provided for, I assure you."

"But they'll insult you, and insinuate horrible things. I've seen 'em. A poor

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girl who has her living to make in the city is in danger of goin' direct to the devil."

"I always thought it was poor boys that saloons and dead-falls and courts of death were open for. It's news to me that girls are the parties who are in danger!" said Amie, tossing her head saucily.

"But women always abound in such dead-falls, and, as their average life in them is four years, the ranks must be filled from somewhere," was the wise reply.

"It's no use arguing the question," said Amie, decidedly. "We've got to have food and clothes and education and shelter, if we fetch up in the bottomless pit to pay charges."

So it was settled, as the elder sister decreed, and Amie, with a heavy heart, yet full of the spirit of expectation which the young so readily inhale, set about the final preparations for a removal from the home which, humble as it was, was yet endeared to her by so many familiar remembrances that it was hard indeed to leave it.

Spring verdant, gorgeous and gloriously beautiful, was smiling upon the answering earth. The refreshing green of vines and ferns went trailing over the blackened stumps, and the dead trees held their skeleton arms aloft above a wilderness of tangled verdure that overran their roots and climbed around their forms as if seeking to hide the cruel work of the fire-fiend. Homely and crude as were the improvements upon Black Stump Farm, the place had become so deeply endeared to the orphans that it was hard indeed to part with it.

The meager effects of the household were crowded into a primitive wagon, the property of the Sykes family, and when all was ready for a removal, and the lazy oxen stolidly chewing their cud in the yoke, while a dozen neighbors thronged around to see the family safely off, Amie took the baby in her arms and paid a farewell visit to the trying-place, where the last well-remembered interview was held with Melvin Hastings.

"It's no use dreaming of happiness," she murmured. "Between that fate and me there is a great gulf fixed. Fate and Fortune have made the chasm, and a maiden's boldest love must not presume to cross it. Farewell, sweet memories. A practical girl like Amie Lee, whose hands are tied by poverty and duty, must stifle every pleasant dream and face her destiny with iron will."

"What ye dreamin' about, sis?" queried Henry, as with boyish strides he stalked along a little in advance of the plodding team.

"Of days departed," was the sad reply.

"Never mind, sis, when we get snug an' settled in Portsmouth, your prince will come to claim you."

"No danger of that," starting on, with the heavy child clinging to her neck. "I'll never be patronized by any man. My work is before me, and I'll devote my life to it, no matter how irksome it is."

"Come, Amie, get in the wagon with little Dick! He's too heavy for you to lug up hill!" called Bill Sykes, as he trudged beside the oxen, and brought his heavy whip to bear upon them with loud and oft-repeated crackings of the cruel lash.

"Not yet," said Amie, "I must see my mother's grave."

When opposite the primitive cemetery, the wagon was stopped, and the weeping family clustered around two sunken spots that marked the resting-places of their parents.

"Whenever I can spare the means I'll build a monument to these remains, and I'll inscribe upon it nothing but the words, 'Twas whiskey did it!'" said Amie, with husky voice, while her eyes were tearless and her whole frame quivered with her mental suffering.

Reaching the city of Portsmouth at nightfall, the family took refuge in a little den of a building, situated in an open lot, without a bush or tree near it, where the great desideratum, cheap rent, could be procured.

Henry's wages as a servant in the Hastings mansion brought to the family and himself the sum of twenty dollars per month, and, though this pittance was their only visible means of support, yet three-fifths of it must go regularly in advance to Hastings senior for a poor roof to shelter them, and a spot of mother earth upon which to tread with their presumptuous plebeian feet.

No mention was made of the dependent family to Henry by the senior Hastings or his legal wife.

Melvin had deigned upon one occasion to inquire after Amie, but he did not offer to call upon her, although the poor girl had secretly hoped, against the decision of her better judgment, that he might be induced to do so by his own desire.

The summer dragged wearily on, and the family were reduced to the strictest possible straits of economy. Had Amie been versed in the art of refined begging, so adroitly persisted in by occasional claimants upon public bounty, it would not have been difficult for her to have secured aid from one of the many mutual aid societies for charity for which the city was noted. But she preferred to keep her own counsel and hide as far as possible her extreme

poverty, never imagining that she could stoop to demand any assistance for her orphaned brood, for which she was not ready to give value received.

When autumn came, it was decided that all of the children at home, except the baby, were to be sent to the public school, and Amie, feeling that Fan and Sue could manage after some fashion with their household duties in addition to their studies, resolved to take her baby brother and go out to service.

The little fellow could walk now, and, though he was barefoot and his dress was made of remnants of a half-dozen cast-off garments of the older Lees, he was bright and beautiful, and Amie felt for him a motherly pride and solicitude as he toddled by her side on her mission of place-hunting.

Ascending the marble steps of a plain-looking mansion, with wide veranda and shaven lawn, Amie rang the bell, and was admitted to an elegant parlor, furnished with fine glass mirrors, marble statues, and the costliest upholstery. Books, which she would have drugged upon her knees for the privilege to read, lay scattered about in negligent profusion of elegance, and a grand piano stood open in a draped alcove.

"Oh, my, how pretty!" said little Dick, as his brown feet pressed the velvet floor, and lying with his cheek pressed to the flowers upon the carpet, he chucked in an ecstasy of delight.

Amie had walked and seemed to her an age, when a dumpy, dowdy-looking woman, in an elegant but ill-fitting robe, came sweeping in, and demanded the intruder's errand.

"I came, ma'am," hesitatingly, "in search of a situation as cook, laundress, chamber-maid, seamstress, or anything useful that you might want."

"Where is your husband?" critically eyeing poor little Dick upon the floor.

"I am not married, ma'am," and then blushing deeply at the revealed suspicions of the daughter of fortune, she said tremblingly, "That is my little brother. My mother and father are dead, and I am trying to bring him up."

"A trumped-up story, no doubt! Madam, I do not want you. Even if you were a virtuous girl, which I doubt, I wouldn't think of taking a child into my house. I bid you good morning," and the hostess waved her to the door.

Now, Amie was no pink of meek perfection to accept such an insult indignantly. Taking the child in her arms, she flashed defiance in her accuser's face, and said, savagely:

"Wicked thoughts come from wicked hearts! I'd starve before I'd pollute my conscience by receiving patronage from so corrupt a source!"

"Begone, you beggar!" was the stern reply. "Here, Ah Wing, set the dog on that creature, if she ever puts her foot in these grounds again!"

Amie walked rapidly down the street, carrying her baby brother, and bending beneath the load, with an additional load of oppression and injustice fugging so heavily at her heart, that it seemed impossible for her to sustain it and live.

"I believe I'll commit suicide. The river isn't far off, and there's no place in the world for me," she said, audibly, as she shook from head to foot with excitement.

"Poor sissy!" said the child, caressing her with his dimpled hands. "Poor sissy, don't cry. Dicky love you."

"Sister must live for your sake, darling." Was the reply, as, kissing the innocent object of her recent insult, she went hurrying down the street.

Suddenly turning a corner, she raised her eyes and stood face to face with Melvin Hastings, his sister Alice, and Miss O'Toodles.

The trio were marching leisurely up the street, and were evidently engaged in a very amusing conversation.

A sudden look of recognition, and a smile and bow from Melvin, were answered by the tearful gaze and bashful nod of the maiden, as she bore her burden onward down the crowded street.

"Who was that?" queried Alice, who had seen the greeting.

"One of my little country friends, that's all," was the brother's reply.

"She's a regular fright in that calico dress and old chip hat. I certainly congratulate you upon your taste, if she's your friend," said Miss O'Toodles, with a sneer.

"One thing is certain," was the quick reply, "that girl has more native sound sense, and a truer, warmer heart, than any other that I ever met."

"Take care, Melvin," laughed Alice; "you're treading upon corns. My handsome, dashing brother is somewhat smitten with that little bundle of shilling calico."

"Is she some child's nurse?" with a saucy toss of the O'Toodles' head.

"I don't see how what she is, or what she may be, can be of any interest to you," said Melvin, somewhat haughtily, as the trio stopped in front of the O'Toodles' mansion.

Mrs. O'Toodles received them with that fussy show of ignorant hospitality so noticeable in the shoddy elements of America's would-be aristocracy.

"O, mamma," simpered Nellie, "we've just met one of Mr. Hastings' favorites, a black-eyed little thing in blue calico and curls, with a great young one hugged to her side."

"That must be the very same piece of baggage that I drove from the door a few minutes ago," said Mrs. O'Toodles.

fanning herself violently. "I've no use for her or her brat!"

Ah, Melvin Hastings, protector of woman, lord of creation that you were, when you saw another woman tearing great rents in the reputation of that little Spartan devotee to duty, why hadn't you the courage to boldly assert her superiority to the silly detractor of her own sex, who sought to sully her fair fame by base insinuations?

Are all men moral cowards?

Amie had been miserable before meeting the one object of her young affections, but she was crushed now. Her heart seemed like a great lump of lead, and her entire senses were oppressed with a mute despair.

The stern fact that sheer destitution stared her dependent ones in the face, alone nerved her to make other efforts for employment, but she was everywhere met with the one objection, "We want nobody for help who is encumbered with a child."

It was of no avail that Amie offered to drudge for the merest pittance, and keep her little brother out of sight and hearing of those of whom she sought employment.

Falling utterly in every attempt, and heart-sick and tired by frequent rebuffs, the poor girl left the thoroughfares upon which the fashionable residences were ranged in stately rows, and betaking herself to the business portion of the city, sought an intelligence office.

Dropping into the nearest chair, she was waited upon by an important-looking clerk, to whom she timidly made application for a situation.

"Widow, ma'am?" eyeing her patronizingly.

"No, sir," with an embarrassed air. "Husband living?"

"I have no husband, sir; but I don't know that is any of your business whether I have or not. If you have a place where you think I could get honest wages and a shelter for myself and baby brother, that is all I ask of you."

"Impossible to get places for women with young ones. Nobody wants to be bothered with them."

"But children have to live."

The man cast a contemptuous glance at the child, as much as to say "non-sense," and turning away, ignored the presence of the girl for some moments.

Amie felt that the last hope was gone, and dropping her head upon the shoulders of her little brother, she burst into a passionate fit of weeping.

"I wouldn't cry, little beauty," said the fellow, patronizingly. "As pretty a girl as you might be, if you had fine clothes on, has no need to be without friends."

"I don't understand you," with a faint laugh. Indeed, the spirit and dignity that were her natural birthright had been well nigh crushed out of her by the blight of bitter poverty.

"I mean that I will help you if you will trust me."

"How?"

She was grasping at straws, now.

Unlocking the safe that stood behind the counter, the lawful protector of women drew forth a half-dozen double eagles, and extending them temptingly towards her, said: "I'll trust you with a loan of this for your immediate wants on one condition."

Amie was frightened. Drawing herself to her fullest height, she said, with spirit, "I did not come here to borrow money, but to get a situation. I should never be able to repay it, and I don't even thank you for offering it to me!"

and leaving the office, she started home, still carrying the now sleeping infant.

"Shine yer boots? Only ten cents."

The speaker was bent upon a bargain, but the intelligence officer was as eagerly intent upon watching Amie, as she struggled under her load.

"I say, Pete, here's a quarter, and I'll track that girl to her sty, I'll give you half a dollar when you get back."

"That's better than shinin' boots," said the boy, gleefully, as he started in pursuit of Amie's humble home.

"Did ye git anything to do to-day, sis?" queried Jim, as they seated themselves around the scanty board.

Amie related her day's experience with much bitterness.

"Poor Dick!" said Sue, when she had finished. "There's no place for you in the wide world. Ame, why didn't you ask them what was to be done with him?"

"Because they wouldn't know any better than I. I met a fashionable woman to-day, who bestows more care and money upon her poodle in a year, than Tot and Dick and the twins ever received in their lives. I acknowledge that I'm at the end of my tether. I don't know what to do next."

"I know," said Jim, in a half joke. "You can wash the dishes and get things ready for breakfast."

"I'm too tired to do anything of the kind," said Amie. "You must soon learn to do without me, for I must go somewhere to work, and I know no better for you to begin than now."

The one little room, which constituted the kitchen, parlor and chamber of the Lees, was well spread with beds for the accommodation of the many sleepers, when all were startled by a sudden tatter-tat with a rattan upon the door.

Amie's heart gave a great bound as she flew to open it, expecting that Melvin Hastings would call.

The visitor proved to be the intelli-

gence officer, who had set a spy to discover her lodgings.

With a smile meant to be extremely agreeable, he invited himself to a seat, and informed Amie that he had succeeded in getting her a valuable place. Every ear and heart was on the alert with expectation.

"The work will require some little accomplishments, Miss. I suppose you dance?"

"I do not, sir. My mother was a Christian woman."

"O, well, as to that, you would soon learn, you know. Do you play?"

"Play what?"

"Cards and the piano. In short, do you know how to use your regal beauty to make yourself fully agreeable?"

"You insult me, sir! Leave the house this instant, or I'll summon a policeman."

"The wages are twenty-five dollars a week, and found," he urged, as he necessarily departed.

"Twenty-five hundred wouldn't tempt me," said Amie, hotly.

"You'll come to it yet, my little beauty, and it's just as well to be good-natured," said he, starting off.

[To be continued.]

Our Young Lady.

Our young lady of the last century was an honorary member of home and society. She sat in my lady's boudoir, while her future was arranged for her. Age or marriage alone could place her in the active walks of life.

This had its compensations—but that she was more useful, happier or safer amidst of doubt. A new era dawned. My woman do, has been the question of the past. Do answers the present. Doing proves ability. Her record for the past twenty years shows a steady progress in action.

In medicine she takes good position and shows her fitness. In science she presents a goodly host of patient workers. In art, too, her struggles are bringing honor to this and foreign lands.

The old seats of learning yield and their gates open—Oxford and Cambridge bid her enter. Pulpit, press and platform make open for her, finding work in each, showing her ability to do it. Her right may not be disputed.

In the school-room, behind the desk, or wherever faithful service is required, she is found equal to the burden. No longer need our young lady be a drone. Yet, she must note, that with greater power comes greater responsibility.

We think of the old picture of Washington's reception at Princeton. The mothers were there but before them, stood their best work, the fair daughters of the young Republic.

Now, as then, they stand needing the same protection, but with the moral and mental training the age demands, they are better able to assume their part in the work of life.

She need not be the rival of man, but, as in the beginning, his helper.

Is there a place of business that is not the purer for the presence of a well-trained woman? Is it not an honor to man, as well as woman, that the ugly word, the profane expression, is withheld in her company?

Would the doors of the drinking saloon be so carefully sealed, or the windows painted, did they not fear the eye of woman?

Are they equally secretive with their own sex?

At home her influence for good and purity is never lost upon the brother.

In the social circle she moulds character as she mingles with the other sex.

Her companionship, her smiles, her words are educating powers that amid life's trials may help some weaker one to step into a better way.

In the church she does her part, but we seek for more in her street, in the cars, in her business, should she make her purity and faith to be felt without ostentatiousness, and yet so positively as never to be mistaken.

Doing her work always womanly, doing it well, the world must be better for her taking part in its active strife.

Our young lady will marry in time; in most cases she should, thereby changing her work from a lover to higher spheres—but it need not be compulsory, not merely for shelter, only when in so doing her higher needs are satisfied in the companionship of home—home, that best type of heaven, where High Priestesses and Queen she may ever make daily sacrifice and rule over the hearts and minds of those about her.

Oh! that she may rightly estimate her own powers, and never cease to labor for the good, the true, and the beautiful.—Temperance Blessing.

In the recent Suffrage debate in the Senate, Mr. Ferry said:

"It is not my intention to speak on the merits of this proposition; but, inasmuch as the Senator from Maine has raised the question of consistency and appealed to its record, it reminds me of the fact that the question of Woman Suffrage appeared as early as 1858, before the Legislature of Michigan. I had the honor of holding a seat in the Senate of the State at the time, and the question was referred to the Committee of which I was a member, and it fell to my lot to consider the subject and report upon it. The resolution favoring women to vote was lost by a majority of three in the Michigan Legislature. The report was in favor of Woman Suffrage, and may be regarded as having contributed to so large a vote. To-day, sir, is the first time since that occasion that I have been officially called upon to record my judgment upon the same question. I have had no reason, since the report was drawn, to shake my belief that the right of Suffrage will not be jeopardized or perverted if withheld by the hand of woman. Believing that now, and desiring to act in accord with my action in 1858, in the Senate of my native State, I am glad of the opportunity to prove my consistency by voting for Woman Suffrage."

A Scotchman went to a lawyer once for advice, and detailed the circumstances of the case. "Have you told me the facts precisely as they occurred?"

"I have," said the lawyer, "and I asked the lawyer, 'Oh! ay, sir, I replied he; 'I thought it best to tell you the plain truth. Ye can put the lies in it yourself!'"

The Good Fellow.

We wonder if the "good fellow" ever mistrusts his goodness or realizes how selfish, how weak, how unprincipled and how bad a fellow he truly is. He never regards the consequences of his acts as they relate to others, and especially those of his family friends. Little fits of generosity towards them are supposed to atone for all his misdeeds, while he inflicts upon them the disgraces, inconveniences and burdens which attend a selfishly dissolute life.

The invitation of a friend, the taunts of good-natured boon companions, the temptations of jolly friendship—these are enough to overcome all his scruples, if he has any scruples, and to lead him to ignore all the possible results to those who love him best and who must care for him in sickness and all the unhappy phases of his selfish life.

The good fellow is notoriously careless of his family. Any outside friend can lead him astray, for he will—into debauchery, idleness, vagabondage. He can ask a favor and it is done. He can invite him into disgrace, and he goes. He can direct him into job of dirty work, and he straightway undertakes it. He can tempt him into any indignity which may suit his vicious whims, and regardless of his wife, mother, sister, who may be shortened in their resources so as legitimately to claim his protection—regardless of honorable father and brother—he will spend his money, waste his time, and make himself a subject of contrast and painful anxiety, or an unmitigated nuisance, to those who care a straw for him. What pay does he receive for this shameful sacrifice? The honor of being considered a "good fellow" with a set of men who would not spend a cent for him if they should see him starving, and who would laugh over his calamities. When he dies in the ditch, as he is most likely to do, they breathe a sigh of relief, and say, "After all, he was a good fellow."

This feature of the good fellow's case, which makes it well nigh hopeless, is that he thinks he is a good fellow. He thinks that this pliable disposition, his readiness to do other good, follows a service, and his jolly ways atone for all his faults. His love of praise is fed by his companions, and thus his self-complacency is nursed. Quite unaware that this good fellowship is the result of a weakness; quite unaware that his sacrifice of honor, and the honor and peace of his family, for the sake of the outside praise is the offspring of the most heinous selfishness, he is content with his disregard of the interests and feelings of those who are bound to him by the closest ties of blood, in the demonstration of his utterly unprincipled character, he carries an unmarked a joyful front while hearts bleed or break around him.

All of the scamps society knows, the traditional good fellow is the most despicable. A man who, for the sake of the praise of careless or unprincipled friends, makes his home a scene of anxiety and torture, and degrades and disgraces all who are associated with him in home life, is a man who is not a man, but a brute. If a man cannot be loyal to his home, and to those who love him, then he cannot be loyal to anything that is good. There is something radically wrong in such a man, and the more thoroughly he realizes it, in a humiliation which bends to the earth in shame and confusion, the better for him.

The traditional good fellow is a man from a pig and unprincipled as a thief. He has not one redeeming trait upon which a reasonable self-respect can be built and traced.

Give us a bad fellow who stands by his personal and family honor, who sticks to his own, who dares not to be outwitted, who is in need of the money he wastes, and who gives himself no indulgence of good fellowship at the expense of duty! A man with whom, in the approval of a wife, or mother, or sister, does not weigh more than a thousand crazy bravos of boon companions, is just no man at all.—Scribner's for June.

The Granger's Ten Commandments.

I. Thou shalt love